

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9128

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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COMUSSAG NKP THAI

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 1858

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB

SUBJECT: RECRUITMENT AND MANPOWER

REF: PHNOM PENH 161498 (051110Z DEC 74)

1. SUMMARY: FANK CASUALTIES SINCE THE OFFENSIVE BEGAN NEW YEAR'S DAY HAVE EATEN UP THE MANPOWER RESERVE WHICH NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION PROVIDED IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 1974. THE NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN SENT AN AVERAGE OF OVER 500 MEN PER WEEK TO TRAINING CENTERS IN JANUARY. IT IS NOW IN DISARRAY, HOWEVER, DUE TO RESIGNATION OF ITS CHIEF OF STAFF AND RE-ORGANIZATION OF ITS PROCEDURES. FANK'S CHIEF MANPOWER PROBLEM IS STILL ITS INABILITY TO UTILIZE EFFECTIVELY THE MEN ON HAND. THE ARMY NEEDS TO PUT MORE OF ITS MEN BEHIND GUNS AND IS ONCE AGAIN TRYING TO DO SO. END SUMMARY.

2. THE KHMER COMMUNIST (KC) DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE HAS COST FANK ABOUT 2,300 KILLED OR MISSING AND OVER 5,000 WOUNDED SINCE JANUARY 1. DURING THE LAST QUARTER OF 1974, THE NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN GAVE FANK A CUSHION OF 4,000 MEN AFTER DEDUCTING LOSSES. RECENT CASUALTIES HAVE EALIFR
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INTO THIS RESERVE AND FANK IS HARD PRESSED TO FLESH OUT

INTERVENTION UNITS WHICH HAVE BEEN BADLY HURT IN JANUARY.

3. FANK HAS SO FAR SUCCESSFULLY CALLED ON TRAINING CENTERS TO COVER ITS DEAD AND MISSING. ALTHOUGH THE DRAFT NETTED 3,400 MEN FROM JANUARY 1-29, ONLY 2,200 FOUND THEIR WAY INTO TRAINING CENTERS. FANK'S URGENT NEEDS DREW 2,800 RECRUITS OUT OF TRAINING CENTERS AND INTO INTERVENTION UNITS. MANY OF THE RECRUITS HAD NOT COMPLETED THE SIX-WEEK TRAINING COURSE BEFORE BEING ASSIGNED TO FRONT LINE UNITS. COMMANDERS REPORT THAT THESE RAW RECRUITS ARE (UNDERSTANDABLY) MARGINALLY EFFECTIVE AND HAVE A VERY HIGH RATE OF DESERTION.

4. MEANWHILE, A GROWING CLASH BETWEEN NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION ADVISOR UNG MUNG AND CHIEF OF THE JOINT CONSCRIPTION STAFF BRIGADIER GENERAL YONG YOC HANG BROKE INTO THE OPEN AFTER BOTH RAN TO THE MARSHAL BEARING TALES OF EACH OTHER'S CORRUPTION. YOC HANG ALSO REPORTED THAT THE MARSHAL THAT UNG MUNG HAS USURPED CONSCRIPTION AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH FANK C-IN-C LT. GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ; THE MARSHAL HAD ACCEPTED YOC HANG'S RESIGNATION. A NEW CONSCRIPTION CHIEF OF STAFF HAS YET TO BE CHOSEN, BUT THE THREE LEADING CANDIDATES ARE ABOUT EQUALLY LACKLUSTRE. ASSURING THE INTERIM IS MAJOR GENERAL HOU HANG SIN, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INSTRUCTION, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNSAVORY CHHIM CHHUON, BRIGADIER GENERAL COMMANDER THE PHNOM PENH SPECIAL REGION.

5. THE INTERIM MANAGERS HAVE INSTITUTED A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE CITY GOVERNMENT'S CONSCRIPTION ROLE AND REQUESTED AN AMENDMENT TO THE DRAFT LAW TO RAISE THE DRAFT AGE FROM 18-35 TO 18-40. RAISING THE DRAFT AGE REQUIRES PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, AND ASSEMBLY SOURCES SAY THAT THE MARSHAL'S REQUEST FOR ACTION HAS NOT YET REACHED COMMITTEE. RAISING THE DRAFT AGE WILL ADD AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF MEN TO THE MANPOWER POOL BUT MANY IN THE 35-40 GROUP WILL REMAIN DEFERRED BECAUSE OF THEIR LARGE FAMILIES. THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES HAVE ELIMINATED BRIBERY-PRONE MIXED TEAMS FOR

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ROUNDING-UP DRAFT DODGERS AND DESERTERS AND GIVEN THAT TASK TO LOWER LEVELS OF THE CAPITAL'S ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY (THE ILOTS). VERNACULAR DAILIES HAVE OBSERVED THAT THE ILOTS ARE BRIBERY PRONE, TOO. DRAFT BOARDS HAVE BEEN SHIFTED FROM THE RECRUITMENT CENTER BACK ONCE AGAIN TO THE CITY'S EIGHT WARDS (KHANDS). THIS NEW PROCEDURE STARTED JANUARY 28 AND OFFICIALS SAY THAT INCORPORATIONS HAVE NOT FALLEN OFF IN THE RESULTING

CONFUSION.

6. FANK HAS TAKEN STEPS TO MOVE MEN ALREADY IN THE ARMY (AND HENCE ALREADY TRAINED) FROM BEHIND DESKS INTO INTERVENTION UNITS TO COVER LOSSES IN ANTICIPATED HARD FIGHTING IN FEBRUARY AND POSSIBLY MARCH. AN ORDER TO REDUCE HEADQUARTERS UNITS 20-50 PERCENT MAY MOVE AS MANY AS 10,000 MEN INTO FRONT-LINE UNITS WITHIN THE NEXT SIX WEEKS. PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO TRIM HEADQUARTERS STAFFS HAVE FALTERED, HOWEVER, AND C-IN-C FERNANDEZ WILL HAVE TO APPLY CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO MAKE THIS STEP SUCCEED. OVER THE LONG RANGE, CONSCRIPTION WILL CAUSE A PROBLEM OF TOO MANY RATHER THAN TOO FEW EFFECTIVES IF IT CONTINUES TO SEND OVER 500 MEN PER WEEK TO TRAINING CENTERS. FANK'S PAYROLL STRENGTH EVEN NOW IS ABOVE THE 223,000 MEN AGREED ON LAST SEPTEMBER.

7. AT THIS POINT, INTERNAL MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY TO RAPID REPLACEMENT OF CASUALTIES IN BATTLE-REDUCED FRONT-LINE INTERVENTION UNITS. THENATIONAL CONSCRIPTION EFFORT, HOWEVER, MUST STILL RECEIVE HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION TO ENSURE THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPLY A STEADY STREAM OF REPLACEMENTS THROUGH THE TRAINING CENTERS INTO REGULAR UNITS.
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